1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Tobacco Growing in Thrace

249 276 656 During an interview with some peasants in the office of the commune secretary of Toxotae in Thrace during May 1955, I was surprised to see some of the men pull out pink cigarette paper in which they expertly rolled cigarettes for a leisurely smoke.

"But why the pink paper?" I wanted to know.

"We are tobacco producers," they answered with an air of distinct pride. "We can keep some of the crop for our own use, but must use pink paper to distinguish our cigarettes from those that are bought."

"Yes," a gendarme added. "Any time I see a person smoking a pink cigarette I can go up to ask for a certificate showing that he is a tobacco grower and thus entitled to 'roll his own'!"

249 [123] [312] This conversation, which lasted for more than four hours, gave me an even better understanding of tobacco farming than I had gained on previous trips, as did frequent visits in the fields with the peasants who were transferring the plants from the seedbeds to the carefully prepared land or hauling barrels of water in their oxcart from a spring or well to the place where the planting was going on. What was most helpful of all, however, was the intimate story of one tobacco village, as described in the Near East Foundation study mentioned earlier. It gave me a deeper realization of the problems that the people there continue to face.[1]

621 162 [167] Dafnon, a village of 1145 people in 1952, is northwest of the city of Xanthe. This community, like so many in Northern Greece, was settled by Greek refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus following the departure of 127 Turkish families in 1924. By 1935, 294 families had moved in, attracted as they were by the rich vegetation, the good climate of this semi-mountainous area, and the possibility of raising a high-priced product such as tobacco. When the first official land redistribution was carried out in 1935, and a second in 1938, it became apparent that the allotments were too small for the support of a family, and so people began to leave. Today there are 255 families.

621 36 [727] [526] [373] The village, covering slightly over 70 acres, sprawls over a hill. Two former Turkish mosques have been converted into Greek Orthodox churches; six grocery shops have total assets of less than $1700; three of the six coffeehouses attract the young men because each has a gramophone and a battery radio; the village school, destroyed along with many of the houses during the guerrilla war in 1948, was rebuilt in 1950. Outside the village is an athletic field on which 30 young men, members of the sports club, practice faithfully in an effort to uphold their reputation as the best football (soccer) team in the area. In the evening, the streets are dark, for Dafnon has no electricity and its people must rely upon kerosene lamps.

621 463 423 Of the 255 families previously mentioned, 220 own land; 32 own no

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

to graze all over the community area as soon as the harvest is in. If the farmers leave any grain in the fields after harvesting, the sheep seem to think it part of their daily ration and tackle it with delight. The farmers have little recourse, since the sheep owners are elected as community councilmen and officers of the cooperative and are always in a position to defend their interests.

Much the same situation prevails in a village near Agrinion where over seven thousand sheep and over one thousand goats are kept. Recently, some of what was formerly pasture land has been distributed to those without land, through a cooperative association newly formed for that purpose, thus restricting the amount of grazing area. These new owners, as well as others without livestock, resent the invasion of their fields by the flocks immediately after harvest. Little control can be exercised unless shepherds so desire, for none of the parcels are fenced off and it is customary to let the animals roam at will when crops are in.

The nomarch of Serrai stated that in his area of Macedonia it was very common for the whole community to rise up in protest against the pasturing of the flocks by shepherds on land belonging to the community. The shepherds insist that they will continue to use these lands; so the villagers come to the nomarch and ask whether or not they must let those so-and-sos graze sheep on their land. The nomarch assures them that they are within their rights to keep the shepherds off, and they leave the office with a determined look, as though no number of shepherds could budge them from their resolve. When these local leaders get back home, some shepherd comes up to them and says: "My sheep will die, my family will die if you don't let me use that land." The people then change their minds and give the shepherd permission to graze his flocks there. Later on, when they see the nomarch and he asks them what happened, they say: "Poor man, we couldn't let him starve, so we let the sheep graze there." But such disputes do not always end so amicably.

Another source of conflict is the lowly goat. The parties to the conflict are not peasants arguing it out with one another, but rather the forest service trying to forbid the peasants from keeping goats. During the dictatorship of General Metaxas (1936–1941), a law was passed and enforced which forbade the peasants from keeping goats. The justification for this measure is that goats, a browsing animal, do much more damage to the forests than do sheep, a grazing animal. In the case of a pastoral village in Western Macedonia, not far from Kastoria, the prewar number of eight thousand sheep and goats shrank during the conflict because of requisition by the guerrillas, army of occupation, and such, to seven hundred and fifty. In order to rebuild livestock numbers quickly as a means of eking out a living, the people got together flocks of goats. The Agricultural Office has supported them in this, while the Forestry Office opposes the idea. The

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

474 428 been accustomed to working together. Even more, the cooperative becomes closely identified with the central government, which immediately introduces not only nonfamilial but even nonlocal considerations. This is a psychological gap which many peasants cannot quickly cross. Promoters of cooperatives from outside may see in them a strong support of family and village values; but the peasant sees in them the impersonality of the political authority, the introduction of money rather than exchange of labor as the unit of measurement, and, at times, even questions the motives of those "who are running around trying to get us to join something we don't know anything about." Throughout Greece I found villages at all degrees of opposition or readiness for cooperatives, but where there was resistance these three difficulties were present along with a dozen other reasons the people gave to explain why they did not want to join.

474 438 The cooperative movement, like so much in Greece, has an interesting past. One important landmark noted by students of cooperatives in Greece was the rise of Ambelakia, a city on the Peneios River in Northern Greece, which became such an important manufacturing center of cotton and silk goods in the seventeenth century that it had trade connections throughout Europe. Its dyed thread was particularly well known then, although its wine is its only product renowned today. Ambelakia rose to economic greatness because of the well-run association which administered the community's affairs. Although this may have been more in the tradition of the guild than a modern cooperative, it nevertheless showed what a single community could do if it organized its efforts in a systematic fashion.[8] The association of Ambelakia, as well as the modern cooperative movement, is thought by some to have its roots deep in the traditions of local self-government, as the later discussion of this topic will show. Not only would one community organize itself as a viable political and economic unit, but several communities in an area would band together to deal with the Turkish masters. But, significant as these unions were, they were quite different in scope and intent from the agricultural-cooperative movement in Greece today which goes back to 1900. At that time a schoolteacher in the village of Almyros in Thessaly, aroused over the fact that local usurers were charging peasants interest rates as high as 100 percent, organized a local credit or loan society which he called a mutual treasury. This type of organization spread to many communities throughout the country.

474 621 [875] 474 426

474 656 In 1915 a new law provided for the establishment of cooperatives, with at least seven persons required to form a society. Such a cooperative could be of unlimited liability, with each member having one vote, or it could be of limited liability, with those having more shares being allowed up to five votes but no more. The Cooperative Act provided certain privileges: exemption from import duties on agricultural implements and machinery, seeds, spray materials, and other essential agricultural materials for the

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

exclusive use of the members of the society; and protection by law from interference by outside interests. In return for these privileges, the state reserved the right to approve the by-laws of the cooperatives and to inspect and audit their books.[4]

Between the two world wars some of the cooperatives took on a compulsory character. For instance, many refugees who were settled on land in the 1920s were formed into cooperatives which could not be dissolved or from which individuals could not withdraw until complete payment was made. In some districts citrus and grape producers were compelled to deliver their products to the cooperatives. Also, compulsory cooperatives, organized by a majority vote of the farmers in a region, could take over the common utilization of land, forests, and pastures, or the task of grafting of barren and wild trees. Quite aside from these compulsory cooperatives and the widespread credit cooperatives, there were many voluntary cooperatives for marketing, production, and insurance against fire, hail, and frost.

In Greece, as in all other Balkan countries, the agricultural cooperatives through the years have been under the supervision of the Agricultural Bank, from which the government channeled credit to the rural sector of the economy. The local societies were grouped into regional cooperative unions. Instead of having to deal individually with each peasant who wanted a loan on his livestock or against the next crop, the government officials could leave the initial screening of applications to local cooperative officials, then to those at the regional level, while reserving for themselves final approval. Under Metaxas, who ruled as a dictator just prior to World War II, the cooperative section of the Agricultural Bank received no support and, in all probability, cooperatives would have found continuation difficult if Metaxas had been in power for a long period.[5]

Then came the war years, which were difficult for cooperatives as well as for everything else in Greece. The situation at the end of the war was described in 1946 when the newly created Food and Agriculture Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, sent its very first Mission team to Greece to survey the situation and make recommendations. This team, headed by Franklin S. Harris, President of the Utah State College of Agriculture, found that the "machinery" of cooperative activities had developed to such a point before World War II that it could provide an important facility for postwar rural rehabilitation.[6] Most of the FAO Mission's recommendations dealt with ways in which this facility could best be used. However, at least two points were brought out which have a direct bearing upon the peasant himself. The first suggests that greater responsibility be given the local village cooperative, thereby placing more control over making individual production loans, receiving repayments, and keeping the individual loan accounts in the hands of the peasants themselves. The general tendency in most cooperative systems is for the center of gravity

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

cost because for the women, in particular, work on the farm was a way of life. "After all, what else would they do?" the visitors contended.

The discussion was extraordinarily illuminating because of the clarity with which it defined the villagers' overt conception of their own purpose in farming. The Vasilika men were thinking of their farms as commercial enterprises and were applying to their operation, however unwittingly, modern cost accounting principles whereby the labor of members of a family is a proper charge against profits in a family enterprise. The Vasilika farmers do not actually keep sets of books on their farming operations, but they do keep records, in an unsystematic way, of some transactions. Even though they do not keep exact accounts, they think of their agricultural activity as a business enterprise and evaluate the success or failure of their family farms in monetary terms. The visitors, in contrast, were recommending that Vasilika's farmers think of themselves as peasants, not as entrepreneurs. In other words, the visitors were suggesting that farming in the Boeotian countryside is a way of life. They meant that its satisfactions should come as much from the means as from the ends. For the women, at least, the visitors contended, work in the fields and in the subsidiary agricultural tasks was as good a way to pass the time as any other and that their work was merely one aspect of their roles as wives and daughters. The farmers said, in effect, that their women were performing specialized agricultural tasks primarily as a means to an end, the end of earning a profit from the operation of the family farm. Therefore, contended the farmers, when women do agricultural jobs, they are properly considered as agricultural labor, like the hired workers with which the households ordinarily supplement their manpower.

The villagers' arguments were entirely consistent with their behavior. To accept machinery and chemical aids which increase yields and save time, as Vasilika's farmers have done, presumes that they place a value both on quantity of production and also on man-hours of work. In other words, they run their farms, at least partly, from the standpoint of rational economic efficiency. Actual accomplishment of efficiency is far from complete in Vasilika. Our point here has to do with attitudes and tendencies.

The tobacco crop gives an even greater cash yield than cotton in relation to the investment, and its cycle of production fits well into otherwise slack periods. Vasilika's farmers would prefer to raise more tobacco, but the acreage devoted to this plant is centrally controlled by the Greek government. Each year, farmers are assigned the right to plant a specific number of *stremata* to tobacco, with the variations dependent on the anticipated world market for the crop.

Men plow tobacco fields in November at about the same time and in the same way as they do the wheat fields. In December, the men prepare the frames for the tobacco seed beds, and the women plant and tend the seeds. The seed beds are usually near the farmer's house. During this month, the canes which will later be used for hanging the tobacco are cut and stored. The villagers use burlap lightly stretched over reed frames to protect the seedlings from the cold

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

The smallness of the original farms and the large size of most families in Nea Eleftherohori began, even in the late 1930's, to present the villagers with a very serious problem. What were their children going to do? To divide the land was a desperate solution, inasmuch as the farms were already near the minimum that a single family could subsist upon. Somehow or other, all but one son had to be freed from the land, find some other form of livelihood, and leave the entire farm to be inherited by one brother. Hopeless poverty if not outright hunger was the certain lot of everyone who stayed on a divided inheritance.[3]

Nea Eleftherohori has been less fortunate than Lofiscos in still another respect. Situated at the foot of Mount Olympus, it lay just on the edge of the territory that guerrilla bands controlled in 1943–45 and again in 1947–49. These were, therefore, years of intense political insecurity in the village, and some loss of life. In 1947 the guerrillas organized a raid upon Nea Elef-

the new generation? If so, why not in Nea Eleftherohori? To be sure, that village pursued a more nearly subsistence style of agriculture between the wars; but this fact by itself does not seem enough to explain the contrast. Perhaps the prevalence of early marriages in Nea Eleftherohori, consequent upon the mode of land distribution in 1927, accounts for the difference, early marriages naturally bringing larger families; or perhaps some recklessness engendered by the catastrophic upheaval which the Asia Minor refugee population underwent encouraged large families, for there is in Nea Eleftherohori, as in all of Greece, a noticeable differential in birth rate between refugee and "old settler" groups, with the refugees standing higher.

3. In legal form, the Greek government retained title to all the land distributed to refugees and squatters after World War I. Part of the original justification for this policy was that it would permit the government to prevent excessive subdivision of peasant farms; and it was still the case in 1956 that legal tenure of each allotment was lodged in a single family head. This, however, did not prevent some families from dividing the allotments in practice among the heirs. Yet the fact that such divisions could not be legalized may perhaps have reinforced the reluctance of the families of Nea Eleftherohori to make them.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Nea Eleftherochori

[Villages of the Plains]

By 1956 "everybody"

178 241 435 [243] was using fertilizer, and yields of wheat (the principal crop for which fertilizer was needed) had increased to between 125 and 180 okes per stremma, as against the former range of 60 to 80, depending of course on weather and variations in the quality of the land.

Even before the war, the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori had shown themselves willing to try new crops. Thus in 1947 there were modest acreages in legumes, cotton and tobacco as well as some vegetables. Only tobacco did well, since there was no irrigation; but government regulations forbade extension of tobacco acreage, in order to maintain prices. By 1956 this restriction had been removed for the district in which Nea Eleftherohori is situated, and the farmers promptly began to increase their tobacco planting. In 1947 there had been a total of 52 stremmata in tobacco; in 1955 there were 480, and in 1956 no less than 898. Tobacco has in fact become the main labor-consuming crop, and it has also become the all-important cash crop for the village. Money income has multiplied several times over with the spread of tobacco cultivation, for earlier, when wheat, raised without benefit of fertilizer, was the main crop, there was often very little left to sell after the families had supplied their own food needs.

178 178 249 433 [656] [435] [434] [241]

178 241 464 [245] [452] A second major departure occurred in 1956. With the help of a bank loan, the village planted an olive grove on 900 stremmata of rough pasture. It will take ten years for the new trees to come into full production; but when they do, Nea Eleftherohori will have a new and valuable crop, with the special virtue of requiring labor at a season of the year when other agricultural operations are more or less at a standstill. By combining grain farming (requiring labor in the early fall for planting and in the late spring for the harvest) with tobacco raising (requiring intensive labor in the early spring and for about two months in the late summer when the leaves must be picked daily and

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia
[Hill Villages]

various government plans would fail. Indeed, I suspect that the vines which the agricultural extension agent planted so hopefully may have died, not because his plans were faulty, but because the villagers failed to look after them.

Aside from the fact that Communist sympathies were deeply implanted in the village even before the war and were strengthened during and after it by the guerrilla movement, one can point to two facts that help to explain the village attitude. First, the persons who stand to benefit principally from agricultural improvements are naturally those who possess good land – the three families that acquired the bottom land in 1905. For the others, on their miserable hillside patches, there is little the agricultural extension agent can do.

Second, and much more important, is the fact that in 1954 the government cracked down on woodcutting. Roughly half of the mountain slopes, which had been "theirs" for as long as the men of the village could remember, were set aside as a forest preserve where woodcutting was forbidden. The villagers did not stop cutting wood, but they now do it by stealth, mostly at night, and go out in parties, with watchmen posted in appropriate places to warn them when one of the forest guards comes by. Such activity smacks more than a little of warfare against constituted authority; and in proportion as the men of the village make their living in this illegal fashion, they maintain an open hostility against the government. In doing so they remain faithful to the old "freedom" of the village, characteristic of their shepherd forebears and of their guerrilla relatives and contemporaries.

Small wonder, therefore, that the villagers regard the government as hypocritical and inimical – pretending to give them something with one hand (but really giving mainly to the "rich" families) while with the other depriving them of their very livelihood. No theoretical arguments, to the effect that Greece

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia
[Hill Villages]

badly needs reforestation, and that in the long run everyone, including the people of Cherasia, will benefit from re-establishment of real forests on Mount Pelion, carry any weight among the woodcutters who feel that their rights have been ruthlessly disregarded, and their traditional way of life endangered. They do not care to be farmers, and for all their ragged poverty, despise such slavish souls as are content to labor long and hard on the land.

A deep and painful irony lies in the fact that without the bureaucratic paternalism of the government most of the people of Cherasia would, in all probability, have died during the guerrilla war. What happened in Kotta, where the arm of the government did not reach, might well have happened also in Cherasia, if the inhabitants of the village had not been evacuated to Volos in 1947 and fed there – however miserably – for two and a half years by government relief. And if the population of the village had shrunk to one third of what it actually was in 1956, then it does not seem improbable that much of the present bitterness would have dissolved, because then something like the free traditional way of life would have been possible again. Governmental intervention between 1947 and 1950 prevented the operation of the brutal old-fashioned remedy for overpopulation; but governmental intervention since 1950 has not yet sufficed (and seems unlikely to suffice in the future) to provide a tolerable life for the population that has so successfully been preserved from famine, disease and violent death.

The official records of Cherasia were in considerable confusion in 1956, and I was not able to secure satisfactory figures on the present and past population of the village. The main reason for this state of affairs is that many families are registered as inhabitants of Cherasia, but do not reside there. When the villagers were sent back to their homes, everyone was supposed to go, and officially everyone did. Actually, about twenty-five

/46 cont./

2. Have land close to the village which can be used for vegetable crops. 241 423

3. If the crop of one section fails, due to hail or flood, still his other fields are saved.

Disadvantages:

1. Waste of time on the road.

2. Hard to work without causing trouble /47/ to the neighbors.

3. Proper rotation can not be carried on.

4. Inefficient use of man and animal labor.

5. Trouble between neighbors either for stepping or stealing from each others fields.

6. Much land is lost for the roads and division lines.

The worst of all the disadvantages are the conflicts that are created among good neighbors because of stepping in each others fields or plowing a furrow on the dividing lines. The priest of the village, who is keen minded, found out that more cases are reported to courts due to field line differences. People who work close together often do not speak to each other because of such troubles. [578] [685]

The land is suitable for tobacco and opium poppies. These two crops have played a large part during years of prosperity in establishing class distinctions and in teaching the people to be more extravagant. 241 249 511 433

Due to surplus production of tobacco crop in the country this area was not allowed to plant either tobacco or poppies, but only to raise cereals. The income from cereals was not as high and forced the farmers to tighten their economy. The luxuries one by one /48/ started disappearing from the village. The debts that were created during prosperous years based on the yearly incomes were hard to pay back. [656] [426]

At present the organized production of cereals and especially of wheat occupies the largest part of the acreage. 243

Farm Implements. The average farmer has the following implements. 000